

Missouri Training and Employment Council

Matt Blunt
Governor

Lewis Chartock, Ph.D.
Chairman

Rose Marie Hopkins
Executive Director

Missouri Training and Employment Council

Ozarks Technical Community College

Springfield, Missouri

August 27, 2007

9:00 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.

Attendees: Lewis Chartock, Katharine Barondeau, Garland Barton, Neal E. Boyd, Edward Bryant, Christopher Filer, John Gaal, Don Hester, Gil Kennon, Herb Johnson, Joe Knodell, Miguel Meneses, Mary Moore Johnson, Rich Payne, Jerry Pelker, Cheryl Thruston, Deb Vandevender, and Brenda Wrench

Staff: Rose Marie Hopkins, Glenda Terrill, Trish Barnes

Other Attendees: Division of Workforce Development: Rod Nunn, Dawn Busick, Donna Prenger, Mark Bauer, Amy Deem, Roger Baugher, Clinton Flowers, Sue Sieg, and Jason Gatz; FEC: Clyde McQueen; Northeast WIB: Sonny Raines; Northwest WIB: Richard Gronniger; Ozark Region WIB: Bill Dowling, Jaydean Miller; Southeast WIB: Larry Swindle; Southwest: Jasen Jones; South Central WIB: Tana Holder; St. Louis County WIB: Gene Gorden, Frederick Douglas; St. Louis Community College: Jane Boyle; MEC: Roger Cook; Platte County EDC: Pete Fullerton; Aquila: Mark Dawson; Retired, City of O'Fallon: Carolyn Caudle

Call to Order

Lewis Chartock, Chair, called the meeting to order and had all in attendance introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Garland Barton moved to approve the minutes. Rich Payne seconded. The motion carried. Minutes of previous meetings were approved.

State Plan

In presenting the state plan, Rod Nunn stated this is a two-year Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Wagner-Peyser plan whose purpose is to outline the Division of Workforce Development's (DWD) structure and describes how fiscal and program integrity are maintained. This plan also tells how policies and programs apply to national expectations for federal funds.

Missouri's first plan was a five-year plan that expired June 30, 2005. There was also a two-year plan that expired June 30, 2007. The reason that there was only a two-year plan instead of another five-year plan was because it was expected that WIA would be reauthorized. In April, 2007, MTEC approved the executive summary which DWD called Modification 2 to the state plan. DWD's goal, after Modification 2 was approved, was to expand the strategic initiatives from the executive summary into the plan. However, at the July MTEC meeting, the council decided that the plan was not ready for the Governor. DWD made technical corrections and clarified subjective issues.

This plan outlines the work taking place in Missouri as opposed to being only a compliance document. The plan contains new labor market information that was not included in April. It also contains performance measures that were negotiated with the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) that were not available in April. Finally, there is a section on the Bi-State Vision for Workforce Development between Missouri and Kansas starting with the WIRED initiative and beyond.

The new state plan does not have any major policy changes from previous versions, but it does contain new labor market information. DWD has included real-time information into the job crawler system that allows DWD to project what is happening in the economy based on jobs that are posted on the internet as opposed to waiting on the labor statistics data. There is also vacancy survey data that DWD is implementing statewide that provides employers with more systemic information on labor demand. Projections go to 2014. DWD is the first in the nation to integrate WorkKeys data into those projections. The plan includes new performance measures that were negotiated with the WIBs and the U. S. Department of Labor (USDOL). DWD uses common measures for average earnings, entering employment, and employment retention. For youth, they include education, how many went to work or on to formal post-secondary education, and literacy numeracy measures. Only youth who are deficient in basic skills were measured for literacy and numeracy gains. For the most efficient result, WorkKeys assessments are used at the local level for advanced levels of literacy and numeracy.

A year ago, MTEC applied for approval of a package of waivers, one of which would allow Missouri to implement common measures. After submitting the waiver, DWD learned that the federal government had a condition placed on this waiver stating that if a state reaches its performance in WIA and adult education, then that state would receive an incentive award; Missouri received one in 2006 of \$800,000. However, if a state uses common measures, then it is not eligible for that incentive. DWD rescinded that waiver request. Since then, USDOL's policy has changed so that if a state uses and reaches its common measures, then it is still eligible for an incentive award. DWD then reapplied for and received approval of the common measures waiver.

The state plan includes a section on the bi-state plan with the state of Kansas. OneKC WIRED caused Missouri to take a look at the many things that it has in common with the state of Kansas. Both states decided to do some bi-state planning that reflects the bi-state effort.

Dr. Chartock asked if the common measures include employer satisfaction. Mr. Nunn explained that DWD tries to stay up-to-date on employer outreach efforts to see how it is serving the needs of businesses and feels that the common measures reflect what is being done. Mr. Nunn stated that for the past three or four years, all 14 regions have had an active business service team. Each team has a representative from each program in the One-Stop that are working together to serve business whether that is making cold calls, receiving job orders, or doing human resource diagnostics for an overall assessment of the business.

Neal E. Boyd moved to accept the state plan and submit it to the Governor. Brenda Wrench seconded. Mary Moore Johnson stated that there were two-pages of concerns with the state plan distributed at the July meeting and asked if those have been addressed with satisfaction. Rose Marie Hopkins stated that they were substantially addressed to her satisfaction. The motion to accept the state plan and submit it to the Governor carried.

Skilled Workforce Initiative (SWI) Grants

Mr. Nunn stated that this initiative is the Governor's set aside fund, also called statewide activities or Governor's discretionary dollars.

The state allocates WIA funding to the 14 WIBs with 85% for the adult programs, 65% for the dislocated worker (with 25% of this money going into DWD's Rapid Response for layoffs), and 15% remains with DWD in the Governor's discretionary fund. After DWD pays administrative costs out of the \$52 million WIA allocations, it will have \$4.5 million available for this year's SWI, including the carryover from 2006.

Dr. Chartock asked if the money is distributed to the WIBs in the same way that the federal government distributes it to the state. Mr. Nunn stated that the dislocated worker funding stream is based on preventing layoffs and the adult and youth funding stream is going to be allocated based on disadvantaged, poverty, and income. The funding is based on previous years so it doesn't necessarily reflect the current needs. Waivers are submitted to allow movement of funding between adult and dislocated workers.

Mr. Boyd asked if there is an equal distribution of money to the WIBs or if the money is based strictly on the criteria in that particular region. Mr. Nunn explained that it is based on socio-economic factors through funding streams. There is demographics research conducted in all 14 regions to show the share of these factors for that area. Each region then receives a percent of the state's allocations in the same way that the state receives its share of the national allocation. The state applies a hold harmless figure of 90% so the region's relative share won't go below 90% of its previous share or above 110%.

Ms. Wrench asked where the rest of the \$52 million went if there is only \$4.5 million available. Mr. Nunn explained that \$3.5 million would be used for administrative costs, Information Technology services that support DWD, and the back office services that support the workforce system. Ms. Wrench asked if DWD was part of the formula at 85%. Mr. Nunn explained that the only amount that the state receives is the 15% and the 25% for Rapid Response. Dr. Chartock asked if DWD is given a greater amount for Rapid Response. Mr. Nunn explained that it is part of the law to address Rapid Response activity for layoffs.

In the 2005 plan, Mr. Nunn felt common policy goals were lacking. He felt DWD needed to focus on skill development and be more proactive in its approach in getting ahead of layoffs. DWD wanted to use the Southeast Missouri model of having dislocated workers and low income adults receive micro-enterprise training and support to open small businesses. DWD also wanted to invest in the One-Stop infrastructure. One problem with WIA is that there are just a few programs that support the infrastructure so DWD wanted to ensure it was continuing to build and invest in the One-Stop.

There are a number of applications or categories based on three quarters of data from last year submitted by the WIBs. There were 576 individuals who received incumbent worker training. DWD only put 1,500 individuals into training statewide. There were 437 youth who improved employability skills through the retention early warning network. There were 235 businesses assisted which saved 265 jobs. Based on the regional skills gap, 1,920 individuals received technical and soft skills training. Through the micro-enterprise training and capitalization, 118 individuals received fast track Kauffman training and at least three of them received \$5,000 grants for business capitalization.

Several of the WIBs stated that the process for 2007 needed more flexibility. Seven of the categories were not flexible enough so DWD needed to allow for more solutions to be suggested at the local level. DWD also needed more time in the application process to meet the application criteria. DWD learned that these initiatives needed to receive two years of funding in order to be sustaining. A number of waivers that impacted the SWI were not recommended to and approved by MTEC until the fall of 2006,

delaying the start up times for some of these initiatives. In the entrepreneurship training and support category there was no money allocated for outreach to place disadvantaged adults or dislocated workers into the fast track training. DWD gave some allowance for administrative support in the entrepreneurship category for this year. DWD wanted to have a deeper incentive for regional planning so the amount was incrementally increased for this year.

The four categories were:

- 1) Talent Acquisition and Development: Basically, any WIB can submit an application for their region and communities showing the talent skills shortage in that region and how to remedy them. The WIB supports the application with good labor market information from the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) and from industry surveys. DWD allows up to \$200,000 to be applied for a single application and up to \$500,000 for regional applications.
- 2) Business Retention: This is for the early warning networks using dislocated worker funds for layoff aversion. The funding available is up to \$75,000 for a single application and \$175,000 for a regional application.
- 3) Micro Enterprise Training and Support: This is the same as last year.
- 4) One-Stop Enhancements: This is also the same as last year.

DWD has received 28 applications from WIBs totaling approximately \$5 million with \$4.5 million still available. DWD also approved 24 no-cost extension requests from the previous year's applications and initiatives that got off to a slow start totaling \$1.2 million. Dr. Chartock asked if that was holdover money. Mr. Nunn stated that this money has a three-year shelf life. There were also 27 new projects funded totaling \$3.8 million.

Mr. Nunn suggested that at future MTEC meetings, the council might want to invite WIB directors to discuss what is being done under this particular funding stream. He stated that the WIBs can use the three funding streams for statewide activities. The WIBs are leveraging their local formula funds to support this initiative. In 2006, one of the rules was that \$1.00 must be leveraged for every dollar invested in the state, which was similar for this year.

Ms. Wrench asked how much of the \$4.5 million was roll-forward money. Mr. Nunn explained that the \$4.5 million is the amount that was anticipated to be new dollars and was just a projection at the beginning of the application process. DWD received 28 applications that were new dollars and ended up with \$5 million in funding. Of that, \$3.8 million was new dollars and \$1.2 million was carry-forward money from the previous year. Ms. Wrench asked if the other \$700,000 went into new computers and ToolBox redesign. Mr. Nunn stated that it is in DWD's state coffers waiting to be used for computer replacement and ToolBox redesign.

Joe Knodell asked if the 2006 training numbers showed an increase from previous years and what percentage of those being trained are entering the workforce. Mr. Nunn stated that DWD hasn't begun tracking this information since this is a new initiative and there is no prior data.

Mr. Payne asked if DWD and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) conducted cross-over work with incentives or funds to see how agencies can cooperate. Mr. Nunn explained that when performance is reached in all three of the programs, WIA issues incentive money. This year, Missouri received \$1.6 million. USDOL likes to see those funds used to impact the entire system. DWD and DESE are working to establish a demonstration project between the WIBs and school districts for the Career Prep and Career Readiness Certificates and to ensure that there is support at the local level so that those certificates are marketed.

Business Retention Efforts

Mrs. Hopkins explained that several months ago, Dr. Moore Johnson and Dr. Chartock expressed an interest in business retention efforts. Due to lack of time available at the July meeting, then this meeting was the earliest opportunity to present this report.

Clyde McQueen, the Full Employment Council (FEC), introduced two members of FEC's business retention team, Pete Fullerton with Platte County Economic Development Cooperation (EDC), and Mark Dawson, with Aquila, the Economic Development manager for the region. FEC's region includes Jackson, Clay, Platte, Cass, and Ray counties. FEC serves urban, rural, and suburban populations and about 850,000 people in the region. There are 12 different economic development organizations in the region. FEC wanted to do three things: 1) create a more effective dialogue with the economic development interests that serve the region; 2) identify a more cohesive way for those entities to interface with the workforce and business; and 3) be an effective tool that can be used by the economic development interests of the area that can help to assist existing businesses.

FEC had discussions about its response to business being more proactive instead of waiting for things to happen much prior to the state's effort to create business retention activities. Mr. McQueen asked Mr. Fullerton to speak with his peers in the economic development industry about partnering with the FEC for the business retention program initiative. From the five counties, 10 EDCs came together and funded a business retention program with the \$175,000. Then a person within FEC was assigned to be the single point of contact for the business retention efforts. The end result is that this has been very successful in identifying trends and in using Missouri Enterprise programs as a way to provide additional resources for the businesses.

Mr. Fullerton stated that the EDC was unsure about having another group of people contacting its existing businesses. The first conversations between Mr. McQueen and the EDCs dealt with the system not having the redundancy of people going into the community partners and disrupting that point of contact that many have worked years to develop. One of the biggest benefits is that there is a straight line to that contact point to be able to provide those services to businesses.

One problem is that there has been no real industry standard. The economic development organizations were doing as little as visiting the business but not providing assistance. Businesses indicated they preferred not to be visited until some level of service would be provided that would help the business.

There is a business retention program called Synchronist that many EDCs were already interested in working with. Synchronist is a very structured program that deals with all business issues and generates reports that provide information indicating if that business has a problem.

Last year, the EDCs contacted over 400 businesses in the Kansas City area. The EDCs then share issues discussed with each other at monthly meetings. The protocol identifies risk factors that may contribute to a company having problems.

Dr. Chartock asked if the EDCs make a distinction between ownership and management. Mr. Fullerton confirmed that the distinction is made. When a changeover in managers occurs, then the EDC needs to meet with the new manager as soon as possible to start building a working relationship to avoid future challenges.

Mr. Fullerton submits a yearly report to legislators that outlines business issues on healthcare, employee costs, and workforce quality. He would like to generate a similar report for the Kansas City market in order for a broader level of legislators to realize the issues and perhaps, in the future, have the ability to suggest legislative changes.

Ms. Wrench asked how the EDCs effectively report on this process. Mr. Fullerton commented that one problem is translating WIA theory to practice. The theory is that staff should be out meeting business and customers but staff still wants to count every body that comes through the door. There are some things that can't be counted no matter how good a numbering system or spreadsheet is available.

Mr. Dawson represents Aquila in Kansas City, a utility located in five states with about 5 million customers. Aquila has been involved with economic development since 1952 and has a staff of seven economic developers, five of which are certified economic developers. Aquila views business development differently than many of its community partners. Aquila understands that most growth comes from existing customers. For years it has been concerned with what keeps existing companies from growing or in the community.

In the mid-1980s, Aquila started a project called the VIP Program which was a business retention call program. This program was a question process that was provided to all its communities to call on companies. The survey format helps to develop a relationship and level of trust with customers. In the early 1990s, Aquila discovered the Synchronist and Executive Pulse programs that contain questions about problems hiring workers, number of currently vacant positions, thoughts on schools in the area, what things need to be done at the local level, and a narrative section that tells about the business and its greatest accomplishment in the last year. The questions are weighted on a one-to-ten scale.

Aquila purchased the license for Synchronist for use in all five states in 2004 for \$35,000 each. It made the program available at no charge to the communities it serves. Aquila suggested that this program should also have a web-based tool. There is now a web-based protocol called E-Synchronist that allows others to have access through the use of a password to enter data after making business calls. The data is then amassed for each company and a report card is received based on those responses. It will also print out a report with suggestions of follow up actions for the economic development staff. The local WIA group partnered with Kansas City Power and Light making this available metro-wide as well.

Mr. Dawson explained that the economic development staff should be developing a level of trust so that each company feels comfortable providing information and knowing it will be kept confidential. Some companies may choose not to, but Aquila lets them know that its feedback is very important for a community as it indicates how this community is as a place to do business. There is a group in every community consisting of city manager, school superintendent, and Chamber of Commerce president that will review the responses.

Synchronist was first used in St. Joseph and Concordia to see if a small community could use this as well as a large one. The same results were obtained and both felt it was worthwhile. Aquila was working towards using this in all of its communities when Mr. McQueen contacted him about the business retention program. This group meets monthly and is a wonderful opportunity to reduce barriers between providers, economic developers, and companies to help them work together better.

Dr. Chartock asked if the calls weren't being made, if companies would have expanded. Mr. Dawson stated that potentially not but that is something that is not known for sure. It is very difficult in economic development to show cause and reaction because it doesn't necessarily happen that way; it is a continuum of time. It does make a difference knowing the economic development staff.

The Cass County EDC was formed as a result of this effort with money provided by FEC. Ray County conducted a business input session where 10 people attended who entered the workforce system and received good paying jobs. The Chamber also attended this session to announce that it was going to begin business retention efforts. With all of the outreach being done, business retention doesn't have legitimacy without Chamber involvement. As a result of business input, the region's public workforce system now has greater legitimacy.

Dr. Chartock asked what metric would be used to show success. Mr. McQueen stated he would like to use the results of technical assistance in terms of the total system and incumbent worker training.

Mr. Boyd asked how many agents are in the field going to these businesses. Mr. Fullerton stated that there are six or seven business development professionals at the moment but anticipates those numbers rising as more are trained. He commented that over the years these calls were not being made to Kansas City or Jackson County businesses but now there are about 15 people who will be doing that because of this protocol. Mr. McQueen explained that there are 12 entities committed to the business retention program. At FEC, there is eight staff with resources dedicated to business retention and business services efforts.

Mr. Boyd asked if community leaders would be calling upon these businesses. Mr. Dawson stated that it really depends on the community. Some communities feel that it should only be the economic development staff making the calls. One community created a business retention team of bank loan officers since these individuals had experience in calling on business and keeping information confidential.

LWIB Current Activities – Ozark Region

As background, Mrs. Hopkins stated that one item in the state plan notes the local WIBs will report to the state workforce board. In this case, "reporting" is in respect to the priorities within the area and what projects are in place to address the needs and concerns of the areas. Beginning with this meeting and at each future meeting, two or three WIBs will present to MTEC to let the council know the status of what is occurring, what kinds of things it anticipates for the future, as an opportunity to showcase things that have already been done, and things that they are anticipating in the future.

Bill Dowling, Workforce Director of the Ozark Region, stated that part of the Ozark Region's SWI was One-Stop Improvements making it possible for the Branson Career Center to receive a new sign and to be remodeled and expanded to double its original size. With the new sign, the career center is able to advertise job openings and workshops being held at the center.

The largest population area is Greene County which includes the city of Springfield. The Ozark Region has seven counties with a total population of about 482,000 according to 2006 figures. The unemployment rate fluctuates between 4.1% and 4.4% for the entire region. However, in Taney County, where Branson is located, it is 7% and sometimes up to 10% due to Branson's seasonal employment.

The region is very diverse as it has everything from Branson's Entertainment Capital to the beautiful hills and lakes of Polk and Dallas Counties. Retail trade and accommodations/fast food services employ the largest block of workers but pay only \$342 per week. The regional average wage is \$580 per week for the fourth quarter of 2006, which are the latest numbers available. This indicates that the region is offering the economic engine of the state but is driven by low wages.

Current WIB activities that the Ozark Region is working on are:

1. Conducted Strategic Planning session for the WIB
2. Have a NAWB Online Training with Dynamic Works which is a program that the region purchased to train the WIB members on how to become more community active
3. Hosted NAWB's Becoming a Catalyst for Change for the region which several other regions also attended
4. In October, the Ozark Region along with Ozarks Technical College (OTC) is sponsoring Workforce Generational Gaps for system-wide training. It is estimated that approximately 400 community and business leaders will be trained in the issues of workforce generational gaps which is a concern that the Chamber of Commerce has expressed to the WIB.

The six key industries that the Ozark Region is focusing on are: healthcare; construction; hospitality; advanced manufacturing; biotechnology; and transportation and logistics. Within the region, healthcare is the largest employer with five major healthcare operations. Construction has been a driving force for the issue of unavailable workers so this year Ozark Region and OTC worked together in applying for a YouthBuild grant from USDOL. The final decision has not been received yet but several groups are committed to making this training happen regardless of whether the grant is received or not. This is seen as a great opportunity to begin new training for the construction industry.

The Ozark Region, in preparation for the chartering program, underwent a continuous quality improvement process and developed a crew card. The Ozark Region benchmarked the Ritz Carlton Hotel when developing this card. It contains the mission, vision, and values that career center staff should automatically express to the customer.

The goals for this year, as established by the WIB, are to:

1. Generate new and increase sources of non-WIA revenue
2. Become the premier One-Stop system in the state
3. Educate staff, board, and community about workforce issues and what each brings to the table. This is the reason for the new Generational Gap in the workforce program.
4. Provide economic value-add to Ozark Region economy. This is the driving force to be the expert in the field on workforce and economic development issues.

The services offered in Springfield during the past year were:

1. Number of people using the resource room: 46,212 people
2. Number of people receiving Microsoft Office training: 200 people
3. Number of workshops offered at the career center each month: 17 workshops
4. Number of workshop participants this past year: 1,925 people
5. Number of people entering the door for service daily: 400 people
6. Number of participants who received a GED this last year: 48 people
7. Number of new jobs entered into the system within the last five days: 367 jobs
8. Number of contact hours WIA provided for direct instruction in GED prep and computer skills training: 18,757 hours; and
9. Percentage of people hired in the region that were registered with the career center: 56%

Dr. Chartock asked of the 400 people entering the door, how many are a duplicated count or if that was people coming in for the first time. Mr. Dowling explained that the 400 is a duplicated count. He also stated that the center doesn't have a tracking system that shows how many times a customer visits the center.

The Ozark Region believes that customer, business, and job seeker satisfaction is very important even though it is not included in the common measures. As part of the One-Stop improvement, the region moved to a web-based OpinionMeter system. Every time a contact is made, the individual is e-mailed a survey asking about the service. It is a quick survey that gives immediate feedback as to how to improve that service. This information is posted in the career center in order to show customers what improvement in service have been made as a result of these surveys.

One survey question was about the career center hours. Mr. Dowling thought that the hours should be extended into evening hours but that is not the feedback he is receiving. This will be a continuous study to find out if the hours need to be expanded to include Saturdays and evenings. The current customer base will not impact this decision too much as they are coming during current hours of operation. The focus will be on those who are not using the career center.

Dr. Chartock asked what percentage of the 400 people using the services need a job or are looking for a better job. Mr. Dowling explained that information is not known because that information is not collected. He estimated that the vast majority, maybe 85%, need a job and others, maybe 15%, are looking for a better job. It is difficult to say because of the hours that the career center is open. Unless the individual is able to come to the center during the day, that whole group of people is being missed. The career center does provide early morning and evening appointments and some counselors have flex schedules so they can take appointments after hours. The electronic service of GreatHires would also allow the career center to help those individuals as well.

The new assessment center went in this year that offers WorkKeys and the MoCRC as well as many other types of tests and assessments for both the job seeker and employer. Employers can use this assessment center to have incumbent workers or new employees tested.

The Ozark Region participates in seven Chambers of Commerce. The region provided onsite interviewing for 26 businesses from February to August. It also hosted 35 businesses as Job Club speakers. The region also sponsored three career mornings. Career mornings are in-house job fairs for businesses to do recruitment. The career center organized two industry-specific job fairs. The first was for the Southwest Area Manufacturers Association and the second one was for veterans. The Springfield Career Center has had three billboards up for approximately 18 months funded by the Hurricane Katrina relocation grant. The reason for the billboards was for outreach to these individuals to inform them of the career center services.

Dr. Chartock asked for an explanation of the onsite interviewing. Mr. Dowling explained that the business will first notify the career center that it would like to conduct onsite recruitment. The career center will announce and promote the event. The business will then use the career center's business center and meeting rooms to conduct recruitment to fill its vacant positions.

Mrs. Hopkins asked what the businesses discuss during their week as a Job Club speaker. Mr. Dowling stated that the main thing that is discussed is what the business does, what it means to work for that business, and what benefits are provided. Jaydean Miller, the Springfield Career Center's customer service and training supervisor, explained that for each Job Club speaker there are job orders in GreatHires for that business. The business does not come to the Job Club unless it has job orders in the system.

The Ozark Region has established a partnership with Job Hound, which is a brand new for-profit job listing service that airs on cable. Job Hound links the career center to its websites. The job listings air on television stations, five radio stations, and the videos are run in the career center. The career center receives free advertising and is listed on all of Job Hound's marketing material free of charge. This was a great opportunity to receive approximately \$100,000 worth of free media to the career center services and have it all linked to the website.

The massive ice storm in Springfield this past winter left Springfield without power for about two weeks. The career center was open the entire time without heat and with limited power. The computers in the main resource room couldn't be used so computers in another room were used for training. The Springfield Career Center sponsors a Day of Caring every year where it packs hygiene packages for homeless and in-need youth and adults. The staff provided approximately 200 packs this year. The career center conducts two yearly blood drives and offers disaster assistance with last year's ice storm being its shining moment.

The Springfield Career Center is currently working on the Work Readiness Certification initiative with OTC. OTC is looking at certifying the Alchemy system in order to give a credential. The Alchemy system needs to be coupled with classroom training and supplemented with real-time classroom experience. Negotiations are in the final stage.

When the SWI was granted last year a partnership began with Bolivar Technical College and Citizens Memorial Healthcare to train nurses, CNAs, and advance people from LPN to RN. Out of this partnership, came the community-based job training grant providing funding at \$1.949 million with a total match of over \$3 million. The Ozark Region is not receiving that large a grant but is continuing to provide services and the clients for the training jobs. Dr. Chartock asked where this money comes from. Mr. Dowling explained that this is a direct grant from USDOL.

The SWI began a \$75,000 partnership with Citizens Memorial Healthcare. There were 20 hospital and long term skilled nursing home employees that completed LPN and RN credentials with an average cost per participant of \$637. There were also 40 employees who completed credentialing for Alzheimer patient care and approval was granted for \$20,000 in unexpended funds for additional employees to complete RN credentials. Currently, only \$55,000 has been spent but the additional income to the economy, without that, is over \$465,000 in increased wages. The average wage increase was \$3.69 which includes those that attended an Alzheimer class who may have only received a \$0.10 an hour increase and those who received RN credentials. Springfield will continue the partnership this next year and will provide more scholarships.

The Springfield Career Center has arranged for new training programs through OTC: the construction readiness program is a five-week, non-credit program; the master welder program is a 20-week credit program; and the truck driver training school is a five-week credential program. There is a class that will be completed in a few weeks that consists of 28 high school seniors who will have jobs at the end of the program. Dr. Chartock asked if a credential is received. Mr. Dowling stated that the students do receive a credential plus guaranteed employment if the student passes the program.

The Branson Career Center has received substantial improvements under the One-Stop Enhancement. The office space has tripled in size, the number of computers has increased, and partner staff offices, conference rooms, and business service areas were added. The traffic using the career center has increased 39% from July, 2006 to July, 2007. The Branson Career Center moved from downstairs to

upstairs and got front coverage. It now has a separate entrance instead of using the TANF office downstairs with a guard. Mr. Dowling stated that he did not want the career center to have a guard as that gives the impression of an unsafe place and everyone who visits the career center should receive the respect they deserve. The door was moved, giving the center a business-friendly atmosphere.

Dr. Chartock asked if there was an answering service available for job seekers to receive calls. Mr. Dowling explained that in the past there has been availability for those job seekers who may not have a telephone. However, depending on the needs of the client, the career center may be able to provide a unit cell phone for a particular period of time so that the client can answer job calls. Ms. Miller explained that the Springfield Career Center does provide an answering service through a partnership with Crosslines. Crosslines provides the client with a phone number; the client then leaves a message for incoming callers and can access messages 24-hours a day. The client gets that service free for two months and after that time, if they are employed and wish to continue the service the charge is \$10.00 a month.

The Ozark Region just completed a YouthBuild Grant application to provide 80 at-risk youth the opportunity to learn a construction trade while working on their GED or completing high school. Those who complete this program receive scholarships to an Associate of Science in Construction Technology. These youth build Habitat for Humanity houses in Springfield working with university and Drury students as these students provide the architecture skills. The Springfield Career Center, through the navigator program, is sponsoring a partnership with the Mayor's office on Human Rights and the Disability Navigator. There will be a Disability Resource Fair for businesses regarding tools and equipment to assist the disabled. There will also be a variety of organizations who provide services for disabled individuals in attendance to discuss reasonable accommodations and what is available for free to help people. The great thing about hiring a disabled individual is that the business receives a better worker for a longer retention and an employee who just needed a little help to get beyond a barrier.

Mr. Dowling stated that the primary challenge of Springfield is low wages. In the past six months, there have been 736 layoffs, some being high wage jobs. There are now older workers who need to be retrained but may be hard to convince to receive training. Others would prefer to retire. The biggest problem with those who have to be convinced to receive training is low reading and math scores. Staff has to decide if it is appropriate to send those individuals to a 2½ year program to increase their scores up to an eighth grade level so that they can receive training. In Branson, the biggest problem is that there are many service industry jobs but no housing so these employees have to commute from Springfield or Arkansas on low wages.

Ms. Wrench asked what is being done for the 46,000 people who visit the Springfield Career Center. Mr. Dowling explained that it is not what the career center is doing but what those customers choose to do. All of the services are customer driven so it may only be logging onto a computer or meeting with a staff member. The Springfield Career Center does not operate with just Wagner-Peyser staff; 50% or more of the staff is WIA staff. It has a triage of three staff members who assist each customer who visits the center with finding the programs that they qualify for, what services are best for them, what is needed, and then make an informed choice as to where to send them.

LWIB Current Activities – South Central Region

Tana Holder drew on the contrast between urban areas and a truly impoverished rural area.

The South Central Region's poverty level is almost double that of the rest of the state. The individuals in the region have significantly lower wages than in any of the other regions throughout the state. The average household income in Koshkonong, where Ms. Holder lives, is \$18,000. The reason for poverty is

the lack of formal education and knowing how to be a productive citizen. The region is trying to tackle the root cause of the poverty as a grassroots effort.

In 11 of the 12 counties, the unemployment rate is higher than the average for the state. 30% of employees in the 12 counties do not have a high school diploma or GED although the average for the state is 18%. The region has 40,000 working people who are at least 25 years old who do not have a high school diploma or GED.

The South Central Region was approved for a \$200,000 SWI grant last year. With this money, the region is sending GED certified instructors into the workplace to teach employees the GED curriculum while on the clock and then study on their own time. The GED certified instructors also teach a soft skills curriculum developed by DESE. After one year of implementation, companies are reporting that absenteeism has decreased, productivity has increased, and retention has improved.

After a few months, a GED instructor indicated that many of the individuals couldn't read well enough to study for the GED test and something needed to be done to help them read better. This year, the South Central Region was given a no-cost extension of another year to perfect the program.

The region is also attempting to build its own workforce. The training resource coordinator goes into seventh and eighth grade classes throughout the region with the Alchemy system to develop a work ethic in these students. The students love it because it is interactive training that uses clickers, is fun, and is the way kids learn. The students are retaining the information in the Alchemy modules. The coordinator returns to the school after three weeks to give the students a pop test on what was learned. These tests showed that the majority of the answers came straight from the modules.

Dr. Chartock asked if the South Central Region has substantial illiteracy problems and if that was being addressed. Ms. Holder stated that was correct and it is being addressed with the project that she just discussed and is funded with money received from the Skills Gap Grant.

Two school districts in the region have Jobs for Missouri classes which are for juniors and seniors who are at risk of not graduating. Through this project, these students get specialized help in not only scholastic studies but also leadership. In one class last year, 100% of the seniors graduated, which would not have happened without the Jobs for Missouri class.

Last year, the WIB decided to use 70% of WIA youth program funding for out of school youth which is the opposite of what the other regions were doing. The South Central Region believes if these youth are not helped now, they will not become self-sufficient and will be enrolled in one of the other programs in the future.

Ms. Holder noted that it may seem like her region is not working as hard as the other regions because she does not have an impressive list of accomplishments to display. It is not that the region is not working hard but that logistically it is not possible for an impoverished rural area to accomplish what the big cities do. She stated that there are few One-Stops that fit all policies because it is more difficult in rural areas. A major difficulty is the lack of a public transportation system. This region has GED centers that are 90 miles apart. When thinking about mandating an increase in advanced math and science classes, she offered a reminder that the schools in this region may only have 13 kids in a class and only one may have more than a basic level of knowledge in math and science. The internet is not a reliable option for training and testing for the South Central Region as there are wide areas with no internet access whatsoever.

Gil Kennon asked what policies, if any, MTEC has established that make it harder for the South Central Region to do business. Ms. Holder explained that the concerns the region had with literacy and numeracy was that the kids had to go to the GED center. Normally though when there is a problem in the region that it logistically cannot handle, Ms. Holder works with Mr. Nunn to work out a solution. Mr. Barton, Chair of the WIB, explained that the problem is typically passed down policies. The state has been very cooperative with the region so it has not met an obstacle that it has not been able to overcome.

Mr. Kennon asked what counties are included in the South Central Region. Ms. Holder explained that the 12 counties in the region are Butler, Carter, Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Shannon, Texas, Reynolds, Ripley, Wayne, and Wright. This is the most beautiful country that she has ever seen but it is also the most impoverished.

Written Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

New Business

Mrs. Hopkins stated that Alan Spell with MERIC has asked that MTEC delegate to the Executive Committee the authority to approve MERIC's annual plan. Every year, normally in October, MERIC brings the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan to MTEC to be approved to maintain federal compliance. Due to budget issues, MERIC is requesting that this be done prior to October this year. If the council wishes to delegate that authority to the Executive Committee, then the Executive Committee could meet by telephone conference call during the week of September 10. MERIC anticipates having the draft ready by August 31, 2007 so that it could be e-mailed to MTEC at the beginning of next week.

Dr. Chartock stated that would be acceptable to him. Mr. Boyd moved that the Executive Committee meet to discuss and act on MERIC's plan. John Gaal seconded the motion. Dr. Gaal asked if it would be possible to have MERIC on the conference call to report on the deliverables. The motion to have the Executive Committee meet by conference call to discuss and approve MERIC's plan passed.

Chairman's Report

Dr. Chartock stated that there is still a possibility of MTEC not existing in the future as it is still before the General Assembly within the economic development bill during the Special Session.

Mr. Boyd asked what types of changes would be made to MTEC. Dr. Chartock commented that MTEC was grandfathered in under an older system so this is an effort to meet the standards of the new system. Mrs. Hopkins explained that at the current time, MTEC is 30% business, 30% labor and community-based organizations, 30% agencies, and 10% public members. This is a structure under the previous federal legislation called JTPA that WIA allowed a state to grandfather in if it had a substantially similar process. The state legislation would convert it to comply with the structure under WIA, which is 51% business. Each of the local WIBs is already required to be 51% business.

Mr. McQueen stated that the public policy issue that faces Missouri is that the programs are primarily operated with federal funding. When a program is 100% federally funded, there are many regulations that must be followed. The business retention program is the Governor's 15% money. Mr. McQueen believes that Mr. Nunn and his staff have done a great job of working within the margins of the 15% budget. The last federal study conducted by the National Commission for Education and Economy stated that for the next 20 years, over 50% of all workers needed in the workforce will need a tremendous amount of retraining and upgrading. The policies need to have more diversified sources of revenue in order to make the programs more community friendly.

Ms. Wrench asked how the WIA reauthorization affects the proposed change to MTEC. Mr. Nunn explained that the workforce board membership criteria will be established by federal law, so the state policy would have to align with that. The language that was introduced in the spring stated that the membership criteria would follow WIA or its successor legislation.

Staff Report

Mrs. Hopkins stated that USDOL is conducting conferences that include a session on Missouri's Performance Scorecard. This was an MTEC initiative that was adopted in 2005 and has been updated once since then that looks at how to compare a variety of different components between Missouri and its neighboring states as well as nationwide. This is a rather unique process that USDOL has asked Missouri to showcase.

Mrs. Hopkins explained that there is one more week of the special session so MTEC will need to wait to see what happens.

Mrs. Hopkins stated that Missouri is hosting the second Midwest WorkKeys Conference to be held in Springfield October 29 – 31, 2007. The focus of the conference, in support of the theme, "Careers Start Here," is a business emphasis so that business understands WorkKeys and what a Career Readiness Certificate can do for an individual business to help it reduce turnover. It promises to be very business-focused but also an opportunity for skill development. There is no definite date as far as when the Missouri Career Readiness Certificate will be available statewide, however, the public relations campaign is underway and it is anticipated that brochures and other informational items will be available to continue to spread the news.

MTEC's October meeting is scheduled for October 25 at the College of the Ozarks with hotel accommodations in Branson. Based on what MTEC heard from Mr. Dowling this morning, perhaps MTEC can tour the Branson Career Center during the afternoon of October 24 if that will work for the career center's schedule if the council would like.

Mrs. Hopkins commented that she had sent an e-mail about the potential to continue with the multi-state board meeting that was held in Kansas City with the Kansas state board. The Kansas Chairman, Gerald Cook, had said at the end of that meeting that he would like for this to continue. Mrs. Hopkins has asked Jasen Jones if it would be a possibility to have a four-state meeting with Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri in the Joplin area and for him to explain the four-state project he has initiated. Mr. Jones explained that the concept of working across labor market boundaries is not unfamiliar to Joplin. There are several Native American gaming casinos across the state line from Joplin. One is going to build a substantial casino that will have a Kansas entrance but will be a Joplin-area employer. All of the work done by the WIB is organized into cross state and industry sector partnerships setting targets in all eight state targets that also have local flavor. The most advanced of those is the four-state area health professionals consortium that looks at shortages of staff in nursing, pharmacy, radiology, and physical therapy. The next step for the four-state initiative is applying for a regional innovation grant which is similar to the national emergency grant but using the WIRED approach. It does a lot of the technical assistance, consulting, and collaboration that a WIRED project would but without the millions of dollars of training money attached to it. Mr. Jones thinks the potential is there in 2008-2009 to do this multi-state meeting along with a regional workforce and economic development conference.

Mrs. Hopkins asked if this is something that MTEC would like to pursue or put on hold. Mr. Nunn commented that meeting with the Kansas state board again would be appropriate since Missouri's state plan has three pages of items that Missouri is supposed to be working on with Kansas that is beyond the WIRED approach. Mr. Nunn would like to see the maturity of the regional innovation grant take off and see what that means for the region before meeting with the other states.

Dr. Chartock agreed with Mr. Nunn. He questioned what this would do for Missouri or if MTEC has enough information to conduct the meeting. Mrs. Hopkins stated that it is very much up to the council. Dr. Chartock suggested that MTEC think about it and discuss it at the October meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

The next MTEC meeting is scheduled for October 25 at College of the Ozarks at Point Lookout.

Adjourn

Being there was no further business, Dr. Chartock adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Lewis C. Chartock, Ph.D.
Chair

Rose Marie Hopkins
MTEC Executive Director